

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

BUILDING 2 EXPANSION
ARTESIA, NEW MEXICO

The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) is proposing to expand Building 2 or the Physical Training Building within the FLETC compound near Artesia, New Mexico. The purpose of the construction is to provide additional physical training space for students.

Besides the proposed action, the no-action alternative was considered. Although the no-action alternative would not have an environmental impact, not constructing the proposed project could have detrimental impacts to the mission of the proponent and to national security, as well as impact student safety.

The proposed project consists of expanding the existing PT Building or Building 2 on the north and west sides by approximately 15,000 square feet. The project includes expanding the existing weight room 800-1000 sf, adding an additional 800-1000 sf weight room, adding four new mat rooms (2000-2800 sf each), adding one new 2500-sf combination mat room and/or exercise/aerobic room, adding two new classrooms (1000 and 1200 sf), adding approximately twenty offices (2000 sf), adding new male and female locker/shower rooms (3000 sf), expanding the existing equipment issue/laundry area space by 1400 sf, and adding storage to two existing mat rooms. The offices shall have permanent partition walls, not systems furniture type partitions. The existing student locker/shower rooms shall become staff rooms. The existing staff locker/shower rooms shall be evaluated as to their future use. The new 1000 sf classroom shall be used for CPR/trauma training.

The proposed project would have a negligible long-term beneficial affect on the following elements: aesthetics, soils, vegetation, socioeconomics, and human health and safety. The following would be negligibly adversely affected on a short-term basis during construction: aesthetics, soils, air quality, noise levels, and human health and safety. Based on these factors and others discussed in detail in the Environmental Assessment (EA), the planned action would not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared for the conduct of the proposed action.

for James Jones

Senior Environmental Protection Specialist
Federal Law Enforcement Training Center

12 July 99
Date

PRELIMINARY DRAFT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

BUILDING 2 EXPANSION
FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT
TRAINING CENTER
(FLETC)
ARTESIA, NEW MEXICO

Prepared for

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
Artesia, New Mexico

Prepared by

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Albuquerque District

APRIL 1999
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Federal Law Enforcement Training Center

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Location.

The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) operates two main facilities: the main campus at Glyncro, Georgia, and a smaller facility at Artesia, Eddy County, New Mexico. The campus at Artesia is located at the northwest corner of Richey Avenue and 13th Street (Figure 1.1). The Proposed Action site would be located within the Artesia main campus boundaries abutting the Physical Training (PT) Building, also called Building 2 (Figure 1.2).

1.2 Background.

The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, FLETC, is the nation's leading organization in the interagency training of federal law enforcement students. The Artesia facility was established in 1989. Approximately 70 Federal agencies participate in the FLETC training program. FLETC provides a training curriculum designed to prepare individuals in all aspects of law enforcement.

1.3 Purpose and Need for Proposed Action.

The purpose of the planned action is to provide additional physical training space for students. Since the 1989 opening of the Artesia facility, student enrollment has increased 400 percent, from approximately 1,250 to 5,000 students. FLETC administrators estimate that the increased enrollment trend will continue. The estimated enrollment in the year 2003 is approximately 12,000 students. The existing facilities have insufficient square footage for estimated future student enrollment.

Federal law enforcement personnel actively maintain internal National security. Superior training is required to prepare those individuals. The effectiveness of law enforcement personnel graduating from the FLETC program is largely determined by the quality of training that FLETC offers. A more conducive training environment would be generated with the facility's additional floor space. The proposed building expansion would be constructed according to specifications designed to fully support FLETC's training mission. Additionally, FLETC is concerned about student safety with the limited floor space. The new construction would alleviate safety concerns in case of fire. Therefore, as a matter of National security and personnel safety, a need exists to provide additional training space for FLETC's Federal law enforcement training program.

Figure 1.1 FLETC Facility Location Map

Figure 1.2 Project Location Map

1.4 Scoping and Issues.

Scoping for this EA is based on potential issues at the proposed construction site including cultural resources, special status species, wetlands and floodplains, soils, noise levels, aesthetics and air quality. Other issues examined include socioeconomics and human health and safety. Public scoping for this document included the City Planner for Artesia and the County Manager for Eddy County. A copy of the scoping letter, dated August 4, 1998, is included as Appendix A.

1.5 Permits and Regulatory Compliance.

A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit would not be required due to the relatively small size of the project area (~ 0.34 acre). The Physical Training Building is not a TSD (treatment, storage or disposal of hazardous waste) facility so a RCRA (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act) permit is not required. No wetlands or other waters of the United States would be filled for the proposed project so a permit under Section 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act is not required.

FLETC must comply with a number of Federal Laws. Among these are the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Endangered Species Act of 1973, Clean Air Act of 1972, and the Department of Treasury Directive Number 75-02, "Department of the Treasury Environmental Quality Program", 25 September 1990. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concerning the proposed project is required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and has been coordinated by the Albuquerque District archeologists. Executive Orders 11990, 11988, and 12898 require Federal agencies to take special consideration of wetlands, floodplains, and low-income and/or minority populations, respectively. State laws complied with include the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1974 and the New Mexico Endangered Plant Species Act and attendant regulation 19NMAC 21.2.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

This section describes in detail the proposed action and the no-action alternative. The beneficial and adverse environmental effects of alternatives are presented in comparative form, providing a clear basis for choice among the options for the decision-maker and the public.

2.1 Proposed Action.

The proposed project consists of expanding the existing PT Building or Building 2 on the north and west sides by approximately 15,000 square feet. The project includes expanding the existing weight room 800-1000 sf, adding an additional 800-1000 sf weight room, adding four new mat rooms (2000-2800 sf each), adding one new 2500 sf combination mat room and/or

exercise/aerobic room, adding two new classrooms (1000 and 1200 sf), adding approximately twenty offices (2000 sf), adding new male and female locker/shower rooms (3000 sf), expanding the existing equipment issue/laundry area space by 1400 sf, and adding storage to two existing mat rooms. The offices shall have permanent partition walls, not systems furniture type partitions. The existing student locker/shower rooms shall become staff rooms. The existing staff locker/shower rooms shall be evaluated as to their future use. The new 1000 sf classroom shall be used for CPR/trauma training.

The existing structures that need to be removed for the proposed project include a storage shed, a modular mat room, and a modular shower building. The storage shed shall be dismantled. Siding and parts shall be salvaged for maintenance on other existing warehouses. The modular mat room is proposed to be relocated to the northeast corner of Marana Street and FLETC Avenue for reuse. There are no future plans for the modular shower building at this time.

The design shall include appropriate signage, lighting in accordance with our site lighting plan (Project 97025), and any modifications to the existing roadway, curbs, and sidewalks. All applicable aspects of ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and any solar energy/energy saving features shall be incorporated into the expansion. This shall include occupancy sensors to control lighting in all areas, digital programmable setback thermostats, etc. Electrical, telephone, natural gas, and water and sewer lines would be provided to the facility by extending existing underground utilities.

When the expansion has been completed, the Physical Training Building would consist of the following facilities: six mat rooms for arrest techniques, defensive tactics, and physical conditioning; two classrooms for First Aid, CPR lecture/labs, and health and fitness lectures; locker/shower/restrooms for male and female students and separate facilities for staff; an equipment issue and storage room for student/staff uniforms and training equipment; 3 exercise rooms for weight training equipment and aerobic training equipment; a full size gymnasium with a curtain divider for student recreation activities such as basketball, volleyball, and a training room for impact weapon training; and athletic trainers' office and injury treatment/rehab area; health care office and treatment room for medical care personnel; and office and storage space for twelve permanent physical training instructors. This facility would allow FLETC to conduct training activities for 10 separate classes of 24-26 students 8-10 hours a day.

A new PT Building was considered by FLETC instead of expanding the existing building. However, it is more practical to expand equipment issue, weight room, and athletic trainer facilities to the west, as well as to expand locker rooms, classrooms, mat rooms, etc. to the north. It is more cost effective to expand the existing building compared to building a new one. Lastly, the practicability and need for all related training activities to be collocated within the same complex suggests that the existing PT Building be expanded instead of building a separate facility.

2.2 The No-Action Alternative.

Under the no-action alternative, the existing Physical Training Building would continue to be utilized. Training space would not be increased under this alternative. The ratio of students to floor space would not widen but narrow. Safety would still be a concern to the FLETC administration.

3.0 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

This section describes only those environmental resources that are relevant to the decision being made. It does not describe the entire existing environment, but only those environmental resources that could be affected by the alternatives if they were implemented. This section, in conjunction with the description of the "no-action" alternative, forms base line conditions for determining the environmental impacts of the proposed action.

3.1 Physical Environment.

The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center at Artesia, New Mexico is located within the Lower Pecos Valley Subsection of the Pecos Valley Section in the Great Plains Physiographic Province (Hawley 1986). The facility is situated on the Orchard Park Terrace of the Pecos River at an elevation of between 3,400 and 3,430 ft. This portion of the Middle Pecos Valley consists of relatively flat to slightly rolling terrain. The 220-acre FLETC campus lay on relatively flat land that slopes less than one percent from west to east. The entire campus was subjected to grazing and other agricultural modification prior to construction of the former college campus (USACE 1998).

3.1.1 Aesthetics.

Aesthetics are described in terms of visual appearance, sound, and sensitivity level. Visual appearance is made up of four elements: form, line, color, and texture. The proposed site's principal form elements consist of even terrain. No vegetation exists on the proposed site, only dirt and rock. Human-made features contribute line elements to the area's overall visual characteristics. These include landscaping, brick and tile or shingle structures, electric lines, fences, telephone cables, transmission and distribution lines, and roads. The area's color varies throughout: landscaped areas tend to green; paved roads are dark brown to black; unpaved roads are light brown to brownish-yellow; and vegetation has a green overstory with a pale green to slightly yellow or buff understory. Sound in the area is produced by natural sources such as wind and birds and human-made sounds associated with vehicular traffic.

3.1.2 Climate.

The climate in the vicinity of the proposed project is classified as semiarid to arid with an average growing season of 195 days (April 10th to October 30th). The average last spring frost is about March 30th, with the first frost arriving approximately November 10th. Average daily temperatures in January are 40 degrees Fahrenheit, and July temperatures average 75 degrees Fahrenheit. The mean annual temperature is 60 - 64 degrees Fahrenheit. Precipitation falls mainly during the spring and summer with an average 10 - 14 inches per year. Winds in the region are from the southeast in summer and southwest in late winter and early spring. Winds average 10 mph in the fall and 16-mph in spring. Peak wind velocities are in the 50-mph range (USACE 1998).

3.1.3 Soils.

The FLETC area is dominated by the Reagan-Upton association, which are primarily loamy, deep soils, and soils that are shallow to caliche (SCS 1971). Previous geotechnical soil investigations for nearby structures indicate the soils are capable of supporting a burden. The soils are generally derived from old alluvium. Specifically, there are three soil types located in the main campus proper area: Reagan loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes, Upton gravelly loam, 0 to 9 percent slopes, and Upton soils, 1 to 3 percent slopes.

Reagan Loams.

The Reagan soil series consists of deep, well-drained, moderately dark colored, calcareous loams that developed in old alluvium derived from calcareous, sedimentary rocks of the uplands. This soil occurs on plains west of the Pecos River and in irrigated areas near Artesia and Carlsbad. The soil is susceptible to wind erosion, especially when the soil is bare. The soil is moderately fertile. Runoff is slow. Permeability is moderate. Water-holding capacity is high. The organic matter content is low. In most places, roots are not restricted, but in some places caliche or gypsum occurs below a depth of four feet (SCS 1971).

Upton Soil Series.

The Upton soil series, including the Upton gravelly loam and the Upton soils, consists of moderately dark colored, calcareous, gravelly soils that developed in old alluvium derived from calcareous sedimentary rocks. These soils are very shallow to very shallow over caliche and cemented gravel. They occur on upland plains between the Pecos River and the mountains and hills to the west. These soils are uneroded or only slightly eroded. Runoff is slow to medium. Permeability is moderate. The water holding capacity is low to very low (SCS 1971).

The project area has been disturbed in the past by earthwork. The soils were backfilled and compacted in order to place the existing modular buildings on the project site.

3.1.4 Air Quality.

Based on the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) under the Clean Air Act as

amended (104 Statute 2399 [1990]), Eddy County, New Mexico, is in attainment status for air quality with regards to ozone and particulate matter (Personal communication with Andy Nowak, New Mexico Air Quality Bureau 1998).

3.1.5 Hydrology, Wetlands, and Floodplains.

Drainage is largely overland with no arroyos or wetlands present on the proposed project site. The major waterways present in the vicinity are Eagle Creek to the south approximately one mile and Cottonwood Creek to the north approximately six miles. Both eventually drain into the Pecos River which is located approximately 3.5 miles to the east. Surface flows would generally be confined to brief periods of summer thunderstorm activity (USACE 1998). The site is not within a floodplain. The main campus is approximately 0.75 miles north of the delineated theoretical northern boundary of the 100-year flood potential (National Flood Insurance Map 1981).

3.1.6 Noise.

Common noise levels on the main campus are associated with daily activities and are minimal. Vehicular traffic is the louder source of site noise. Natural noises, such as wind and birds, is the quieter source of site noise.

3.2 Biological Environment

3.2.1 Vegetation.

Artesia, New Mexico is located in the Southwest Semidesert Grasslands floristic community (Brown, D.E. 1994). Grass (Poaceae family) is the dominant vegetation in the area. Forbs are also abundant, however shrubs are less abundant and tend to be more common near streams or in rocky areas. There is no vegetation located at the proposed project site.

3.2.2 Wildlife.

The proposed construction site does not support continuous habitation by wildlife. Mammals, which may occur in the proposed site, include the desert cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus muttali*) and the black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*). Birds which may periodically occur at the site include the Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), Ferruginus hawk (*Buteo regalis*), American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), and house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) (Findley *et al.* 1975, Findley 1987).

3.2.3 Special Status Species.

Three agencies have primary responsibility for the conservation of animal and plant species in New Mexico: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), under authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (as amended); the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, under the authority of the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1974; and the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, under authority of the New Mexico Endangered Plant Species Act and attendant regulation 19 NMAC 21.2. Each Agency maintains a list of animal or plant species, which have been classified or are candidates for classification as endangered or threatened, based on present status and potential threat to future survival or recruitment. Species with the potential to occur near the proposed project site are listed in Table 1. Coordination correspondence is located in Appendix B.

Plant Species.

Various listed plant species occur within Eddy County (Sivinski and Lightfoot 1995). The species which could occur in an undisturbed environment similar to the planned action location are listed in Table 1. However, there is no possibility of listed plant species occurring in or near the planned action site due to the fact there is no existing vegetation on the site.

Animal Species.

The American Peregrine Falcon and the Bald Eagle have a slight potential to occur at the proposed site. The value of the surrounding area as potential breeding habitat for either of these species is limited by the lack of water resources. The Peregrine Falcon potentially may use the general locality for resting or foraging during the spring or fall migration. Its preferred breeding habitat is open country and steep rocky cliffs in close proximity to water, containing dense bird populations in conjunction with steady strong air currents (NMDGF 1988). The aridity and flat topography of the proposed location eliminates the area as Peregrine breeding habitat.

The Bald Eagle winters in riparian and lacustrine habitats of the Rio Grande and other major rivers in New Mexico between mid-November and mid-March. During migration, it also can be found along mountain ridges. In New Mexico, breeding birds are known only from San Juan County (NMDGF 1988). This species has a low probability of occurring at the project site.

The Aplomado Falcon occurs in open grassland terrain with scattered yucca and mesquite and an abundance of small to medium-sized birds. Suitable nests are stick nests constructed by other bird species and are typically located in large branched yuccas and mesquites. Woody

vegetation, fence posts, and telephone poles serve as perches (USFWS 1998). The lack of suitable nesting sites and the heavily disturbed condition of the site indicate a low probability of the Aplomado occurring at the proposed site.

The Gray Vireo ranges from the southwestern United States to central Mexico. It prefers habitats of brushy mountain slopes, mesas, open chaparral, scrub oak and junipers (NMDGF 1988). If the Gray Vireo were to be in the area, it would be during the summer breeding season.

The Bell's Vireo ranges throughout the southwest. The species characteristically occurs in the dense shrubland or woodland along lowland stream courses, with willows, mesquites, and seepwillows being characteristic plant species. Nesting sites are generally amid small sticks and twigs not far above the ground and along streamsides. The lack of a riparian environment would inhibit the species from occurring at or near the proposed location (Bull and Farrand, Jr.).

The Baird's Sparrow is a migrant in New Mexico, occurring primarily in the eastern plains and southern lowlands during autumn. The sparrow may be found in a variety of habitats, ranging from desert grasslands to mountain meadows. The lack of preferred vegetation would indicate the species would not occur at or near the proposed site (Bull and Farrand, Jr.).

The Varied Bunting ranges from southwestern U.S. to Guatemala. The species regularly breeds in southern New Mexico. It prefers dense stands of mesquite and associated growth in canyon bottoms. The relatively flat topography and lack of dense stands of mesquite at the proposed location would make the occurrence of the species unlikely (Bull and Farrand, Jr.).

Consultation was conducted with the Ecological Services Field Office of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) and the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (NMEMNRD) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for the proposed action areas in Doña Ana County (Appendix B).

Table 1. Federal and State of New Mexico Special Status Species with Potential to Occur Near the FLETC Proposed Action Site*

	Federal	State of
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Table 1. Federal and State of New Mexico Special Status Species with Potential to Occur Near the FLETC Proposed Action Site*		
Plant Species	(USFWS) status	New Mexico Status
Tharp's blue-star (<i>Amsonia tharpai</i>)	SC	E
Scheer's pincushion cactus (<i>Coryphantha scheeri</i>)	--	E
Kuenzler's hedgehog cactus (<i>Echinocereus fendleri</i>)	E	E
Lloyd's hedgehog cactus (<i>Echinocereus lloydii</i>)	E	E
Gypsum wild buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum gypsophilum</i>)	T	E
Waterfall milkvetch (<i>Astragalus waterfallii</i>)	--	R
Wright's justicia (<i>Justicia wright</i>)	--	R
Dune unicorn plant (<i>Proboscidea sabulosa</i>)	--	R
Desert parsley (<i>Pseudocymopterus longiradiatus</i>)	--	R
Lee pincushion cactus (<i>Coryphantha sneedii</i> var. <i>leei</i>)	T	E
Bird Species		
American Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>)	E	T
Aplomado Falcon (<i>Falco femoralis septentrionalis</i>)	E	E
Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	T	T
Baird's Sparrow (<i>Ammodramus bairdii</i>)	SC	T
Bell's Vireo (<i>Vireo bellii</i>)	--	T
Varied Bunting (<i>Passerina versicolor</i>)	--	T
Gray Vireo (<i>Vireo vicinior</i>)	--	T

* E=endangered; T=threatened; R=rare and sensitive; SC=species of concern

3.3 Socioeconomic Environment.

The planned action site is located in Eddy County, New Mexico. The total population of Eddy County in 1995 is listed as being 52,758 individuals. The ethnic breakdown for Eddy county is: Hispanic (any race), 35.3%; white (non-Hispanic), 46.2%; black (non-Hispanic), 1.7%; and other (non-Hispanic), 16.8%. In 1994, the civilian workforce numbered 23,102 with unemployment 8.3%. The 1993 per capita income in Eddy County was \$15,955 (U.S. Census Bureau 1995). Industries making major economic contributions to the county's economy include agriculture and mining natural resources. Federal, state, and local governments are the largest employers in the county.

Carlsbad is the county seat for Eddy County. Artesia has a population of 10,600. The largest employer in Artesia is the Navajo Refining Company, employing 430 individuals. FLETC and the City of Artesia have significant economic interaction. Compound grounds-keeping and general maintenance tasks are contracted out to individuals in the Artesia area. Additionally, daily purchases by compound personnel beneficially impact the local economy.

3.4 Human Health and Safety.

The FLETC campus is located within Artesia city limits. Artesia has a 38-bed General Hospital. The city also has the 65-bed Good Samaritan Nursing Home. Artesia is home to 10 physicians and surgeons, 10 osteopathic physicians, five chiropractors, and five dentists. A patient would be required to go to one of the larger cities in New Mexico or Texas for highly specialized treatments. The fire department has 19 full-time employees and 15 volunteers with four trucks, one rescue truck, and four fully equipped ambulances. The ambulances are staffed with at least one Emergency Medical Basic Technician per vehicle. The Artesia Police Department employs 30 full-time people with nine motorized patrols. Six county officers and four state police units are also assigned to the area. In addition, the FLETC has its own security and, in general, students and instructors are trained in law enforcement and emergency response (USACE 1998).

3.5 Cultural Resources.

A cultural resources survey of the proposed project location was conducted on 25 August 1998 by a qualified USACE archeologist. The proposed construction location has been heavily disturbed in the past. No cultural resources were located during the field investigation. According to the cultural resources report, most of the FLETC campus shows evidence of extensive development (Appendix B). There are no cultural properties that have been listed, or are eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places within or near the proposed project location.

4.0 FORESEEABLE EFFECTS

A foreseeable effect is defined as a possible modification in the existing environment brought about by development activities. Impacts can be beneficial or adverse, a result of a direct or an indirect action, and permanent (long-lasting) or temporary (short term). Impacts can vary in degree from a slightly discernable change to a total change in the environment. Short-term impacts usually occur during and immediately after the construction of the project. Although short in duration, such impacts may be obvious and disruptive. For this project, short-term impacts are defined as those lasting 2 years or less, whereas long-term impacts are those lasting more than 2 years.

Significance criteria are presented for each affected resource. These criteria are based on existing regulatory standards, scientific and environmental documentation, and/or professional judgment. Potential impacts for this project were classified at one of four levels: significant, moderate, negligible, and no impact. Significant impacts (as defined in Council on Environmental Quality [CEQ] guidelines 40 CFR 1500-1508) are effects that are most substantial and therefore should receive the greatest attention in decision making. Moderate impacts do not meet the criteria to be classified as significant but nevertheless result in change that is easy to detect. Negligible impacts result in little or no effect to the existing environment and cannot be easily detected. In the following discussions, impacts are considered to be adverse unless identified as beneficial.

Cumulative impacts are those which result from the incremental impacts of an action added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, regardless of who is responsible for such actions. Irreversible and irretrievable impacts are permanent reductions or losses of resources that, once lost, cannot be regained. In comparing short-term use of the environment with long-term productivity for this project, short-term use of the environment is that use during the short construction phase, and long-term productivity refers to the period after the project is complete. Cumulative impacts, irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources, and short-term use of the environment versus long-term productivity are discussed in separate sections following the discussion of resources.

4.1 Physical Environment.

4.1.1 Aesthetics.

Visual aesthetics found in the proposed project area are generally not outstanding. There is no existing vegetation located at the project site, only dirt and rock. Landscaping with native plants is planned around the expansion that is visually pleasing. The expansion would be constructed of the same material as the existing PT Building. The material would be concrete masonry unit with brick face to match the existing building. The expansion would conform to existing aesthetic schemes for surrounding facilities. The aesthetic environmental impact of the planned action is considered negligible in the short-term and negligibly beneficial in the long-term.

4.1.2 Climate.

There would be no impact on existing climate resulting from the planned action.

4.1.3 Soils.

Impacts to soils would be considered significant if a reduction in soil productivity and/or increased erosion would prevent successful reclamation and revegetation.

There would be negligible short-term environmental impacts on soil at the proposed site. Wind erosion would increase during construction activities. Standard soil erosion control procedures would be implemented to minimize soil erosion. Existing paved roads would be utilized for site ingress and egress. After construction, remaining areas in the planned action location would be vegetated or landscaped. A xeriscape landscaping design is recommended. Since the existing condition contains no vegetation and only barren soil, the proposed condition would reduce soil erosion by stabilizing the soil with an increase in landscape plants. There would be negligible long-term beneficial impacts on soil anticipated by the proposed project.

4.1.4 Air Quality.

There would be a negligible short-term effect on air quality under the proposed construction. The effect would exist during construction and consist of emissions from construction equipment. The emissions are not considered significant and would not affect Eddy County's attainment status with the State of New Mexico. Dust generated from construction activities would be addressed by implementing State-required dust control measures. Dust would be generated in quantities to create a negligible short-term environmental impact.

4.1.5 Hydrology, Wetlands, and Floodplains.

Runoff generated from rainwater draining from the roof would not affect hydrology. The proposed facility would not affect surface flow collection. Therefore, surface hydrology would be unaffected under the planned action. No wetlands or floodplains would be impacted by the proposed project or the no-action alternative.

4.1.6 Noise.

The proposed project would generate a moderate short-term noise impact from standard construction operations. Nighttime construction is not expected. Long-term noise impact

resulting from operation of the facility is not anticipated. There are no residential areas located within approximately 0.65 miles of the proposed location. No civilian residential development area would be affected by the short-term noise impact. The total environmental impact of noise resulting from the planned action is considered negligible.

4.2 Biological Factors.

Impacts to vegetation resulting from the proposed project are considered significant if they result in a long-term reduction in vegetation productivity or a permanent change in species composition. Impacts to wildlife resources are considered significant if they prevent realization of specified population objectives. Any action that results in the disruption of raptor breeding activities and subsequent reproductive failure may be considered an adverse impact. Any action that would adversely affect state and federally listed or candidate threatened endangered species, their critical habitat, or any recovery program for such species is considered an adverse and/or significant impact.

4.2.1 Vegetation.

After construction, the area around the new PT building is proposed to be re-vegetated and landscaped with native New Mexican plants. The vegetation quantity and quality would increase at the project site since no vegetation exists presently. A long-term negligible benefit would occur with the proposed project.

4.2.2 Wildlife.

There would be no permanent long-term displacement of wildlife since no wildlife has been observed at the project location. The planned action could possibly displace nearby wildlife during construction activities temporarily and have a negligible short-term impact. There are no long-term environmental impacts anticipated under the planned action.

4.2.3 Special Status Species.

Due to the disturbed nature of the proposed site, it is unlikely that the habitat is suitable for use by any of the listed special status species (see page 15). None of these species were noted during the field reconnaissance survey. There would be no impact to special status plant species since no plants exist on the site. Because adequate habitat for the sensitive bird species is generally lacking, it is unlikely that there would be any impact to these species. It should be noted that, during the construction phase, if any sensitive species in or near the project site are found, appropriate action would be taken to protect the resource.

4.3 Socioeconomic Affects.

The proposed construction activity would moderately benefit local economies in the short-term by creating a demand for goods and services. The quartering of work force personnel would provide additional income to local motels in Artesia. Local purchases of food, gasoline, hardware, building materials and services would provide a temporary increase in income for local businesses. Negligible long-term economic benefits would develop locally from increased student enrollment. No negative socioeconomic effect would result from the proposed activities. No adverse impacts on minority and low income populations are expected. Under the definition of Executive Order (EO) 12898, there would be no adverse environmental justice impacts under the Proposed Action.

4.4 Human Health and Safety.

The planned action would have negligible short-term health and safety impacts based on inherent hazards in vertical construction. Prior to construction, an approved Site Specific Health and Safety Plan (SSHASP) would be developed and implemented. There are no major health and safety critical issues anticipated. The existing PT Building does not contain asbestos since the building was constructed in 1992. The planned action would have a negligible beneficial long-term health and safety impact. Expanding the PT Building would create less of a fire hazard and provide more space for students. Moreover, the facility would be specifically designed to account for safety issues relating to FLETC training. Any upgrades shall be designed into this project. The expansion would be built according to current building and fire codes.

4.5 Cultural Resources.

A variety of project activities could result in impacts to sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Significant impacts include physical disturbance, the isolation of an eligible cultural resource from its context, the introduction of visual, audible, or atmospheric elements that significantly alter its setting or is out of character with a NRHP eligible site or disturbance to important sites of religious or cultural significance for Native Americans.

No impact would occur to cultural resources as a result of the Proposed Action. A file search resulted in a finding of no sites in the areas of the Proposed Action, and further examination of the project location by qualified archaeologists revealed no cultural resources. The State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) for New Mexico has concurred with the recommendation of "No Effect" to cultural resources for the proposed undertaking. A copy of this correspondence is available in Appendix B. Should any cultural resources be identified during construction then the work would cease, the New Mexico SHPO contacted and appropriate measures taken.

4.6 Cumulative Impacts.

Cumulative impacts are those which result from the incremental impacts of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (40 CFR 1508.7). The relatively minor amount of adverse noise, aesthetics, soils, air quality, and human health and safety impacts during construction would not create a significant amount of cumulative impact on the environment. This project when added to the other projects presently being constructed or reasonable foreseeable future actions at the FLETC facility would not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts.

4.7 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources.

4.7.1 Irreversible Commitment.

An irreversible commitment of resources is one in which the ability to use and/or enjoy the resource is lost forever. The proposed action would not create an irreversible commitment of resources. The building and its expansion could be taken down at a future date and the space opened up again if needed. No resource present on the site would be lost forever due to the proposed project.

4.7.2 Irretrievable Commitment.

An irretrievable commitment of resources is one in which, due to decisions to manage the resource for another purpose, opportunities to use or enjoy the resource as they presently exist are lost for a period of time. The proposed project would include utilizing at a maximum approximately 0.34 acres of land already heavily disturbed. This area would be affected for the life of the project where the structure is situated.

4.8 Short-term Uses and Long-term Productivity.

The short-term construction period would produce negligible adverse impacts to the environment. However, this is offset by the long-term productivity of the project. The building expansion would have many beneficial uses during the life of the project. If the project is ever abandoned, the facility could be re-used in another capacity.

4.9 No-action Alternative

The no-action alternative would have no impact on aesthetics, air quality, climate, soils, hydrology, wetlands, floodplains, noise, vegetation, wildlife, special status species,

socioeconomics, human health and safety, cultural resources, cumulative impacts, irreversible and irretrievable impacts and short-term uses and long-term productivity.

4.10 Mitigation.

The minor short-term impacts to the environment from the proposed project do not warrant any mitigation. Mitigation is not proposed for this project.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The no-action alternative would have no effect on the human environment, however, under this alternative, FLETC would be unable to accommodate the estimated increase in student enrollment. Since training federal law enforcement personnel equates to supporting internal National security, the Proposed Action is deemed necessary. Short-term benefits of the proposed project include aesthetics, soil stabilization, revegetation, socioeconomics and human health and safety. Construction of the PT Building expansion would not result in any moderate or significant, short-term, long-term, or cumulative adverse effects, and, therefore, is recommended. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be generated for the proposed construction.

6.0 PREPARATION AND COORDINATION

6.1 Preparation.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District (USACE). Personnel primarily responsible for preparation include:

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

